

The impact of Revenge Desires on Organization Justice and Counter Productive Work Behavior

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Abstract *This paper explores the correlation existing between organizational justice and counterproductive work behavior towards organizations (CWB-O) and supervisors (CWB-S). A sample used comprised 169 employees in the public and the private sector organizations. Based on statistical analysis, procedural injustice and distributive injustice are significant contributors of counterproductive behavior to the organization. Conversely, counterproductive behavior towards the supervisors depends more on interpersonal injustice and informational injustice. The hierarchical regression outcomes show that interpersonal justice has the highest amount of unique variance in CWB-S, and procedural justice has the highest amount of unique variance in CWB-O. Addition, the need of the employees to take vengeance on their employer mediates the relationship between organizational justice and CWB-O. Likewise, the organizational justice and the counterproductive work behavior towards supervisors are mediated by the need of employees to seek vengeance against the bosses in the modern workplace environments.*

Key Words: Revenge Desires, Counterproductive, Organizational Justice, Work Behavior

JEL Classification:

Introduction

Since counter productive work behavior has harmful outcomes in organizations and on the employees, it is essential to have a better understanding of factors that control such behaviors. It is also necessary to understand the negative consequences of organizational injustice as much as it is necessary that researchers examine the positive role of organization justice on employees and on the organization even though such a research is necessary. The fact that counterproductive work behavior reduces the productivity of the employees and raises the turnover rate of the employees makes it a threat to the efficiency of the organizations and the employees alike ([LeBlanc and Kelloway, 2002](#)). According to Spector's job stress model, people who are high on negative affectivity are more susceptible to small nuisance and disappointments and more likely to desire revenge, anger and feel rejected ([Penny and Spector, 2005](#)).

The purpose of the study is to discover the relationship between the various types of organization justice and counterproductive behavior. Also to be investigated is the effects of the revenge desires experienced by employees on their counterproductive behavior towards their organizations and their immediate supervisors.

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Literature Review

Workplace deviance is also referred to as counterproductive work behavior (CWB) that is a behaviour that affects the organizational objectives in a manner that is detrimental to both the company and its members. So far, research has determined counterproductive workplace behavior in numerous ways, such as organisational hostility, antisocial behaviour, retaliation, revenge and mobbing/bullying. However, they all hold that counterproductive work behavior is hazardous to the workplace since it consistently influences its correct operations and health, or impact on personnel in a manner that diminishes their productivity at work ([Fox et al., 2001](#)). Sackett (2002) described unproductive work behavior as a purposeful behavior that contravenes organizational rules, and negatively affects the legal interest of the organization.

Behavioral strain is exemplified by counterproductive work conduct. The fundamental equity theory and empirical research proposed by Adams (1963) reveal that the injustice (unfairness) in people leads to their withdrawal in a diversified manner of thoughts and actions. According to [Spector et al. \(1988\)](#), unproductive job conduct was defined as the emotional response to a difficult organization environment. One might also find behavioral pressures which are one of the unproductive job behaviors like yelling at a colleague, spending hours away at home instead of working, and compromising the quality of work.

Leventhal has proposed procedural fairness, which holds that procedures should adhere to several criteria that will mean that they are considered as true. The following are the requirements he identified: they should be non-partisan, stable, just and on the basis of true information; they should also have an inbuilt mechanisms of rectifying wrong decisions and decision concerning organizational procedures should be transparent and should be beneficial to all ([Colquitt et al., 2001](#)).

Distributive justice is associated with working class perceptions of the justice of the outcomes they receive concerning their work, and results and contributions of others. [Fox et al., \(2001\)](#) stated that interactional justice is the way the workers are treated and viewed in application of different organizational policies ([Bies and Moag, 1986](#)). The employees require their employer and organization to treat them equally, with respect, pride and integrity ([Janssens et al. 2003](#)).

The interactional justice described in the theory of Social exchange declares that the employees anticipate businesses and its representatives to be precise, fair, truthful, and cordial ([Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005](#)). Lewis et al. (2000) deduce the theory of social exchange statement to conclude that supervisor-reference outcomes, i.e., that directed towards organizations, are predetermined by the interactional justice, whilst organizational-reference outcomes, i.e. that directed towards organizations, are determined by the procedural justice. They concluded that procedural justice, in comparison with interactional one, bore a more significant influence on turnover intentions. As compared to informational justice that showed the extent of openness and faithfulness of the information given to employees regarding the way things are done and how results are shared between workers, interpersonal justice revealed the extent of civility.

The reciprocity norm stated that employees who felt they had been fairly treated had increased organization loyalty, organizational civic involvement, and low turnover

intentions ([Cohen and others, 2001](#)). When employees feel that they are being treated unfairly, they become furious. Anxiety and aggressive behaviour in workplace are negatively related to the perception of fairness on employees by their colleagues and supervisors. They underscored the fact that organizations must strive hard to promote managers and employees to interact freely with each other due to the significance of good social exchange relationships (Labedo et al. 2008). Most employees attribute the stress to a bad relationship with their bosses ([Tepper, 2007](#)).

The term revenge motive is meant to represent the intent of the aggrieved or suffering party to harm, injure or inflict pain on the individual suspected of the harm, in a punitive kind of way ([Aquino and associates, 2001](#)). According to [Biess and Tripp \(1996\)](#), the revenge motive was defined by the authors as a cognitive variable. The cognitive stage model proposed by Beuger (2005) asserts that an aggressive or counterproductive work behavior by employees is as a result of three consecutive steps in cognition namely the assessment stage where the employees are seen to develop a discrepancy between the actual and expected result or the second stage as an accountability stage where the employees are seen to reason the cause and origin of the injustice. At the third phase of response, the workers direct their revenge towards the perceived victim.

[Judge et al. \(2006\)](#) examine the correlation between misbehavior at the workplace and job attitude, as well as enmity. They found out that instant anger, interpersonal fairness, and job pleasure were the reasons that accounted over half of the total variation in deviance at the workplace, which was within-individual. They further asserted that workers who felt that their superiors were treating them well were happier at their workstations than those who thought that their superiors were abusing them. Studies of justice that are more recent have associated unpleasant feelings with perceived unfairness ([Skarlicki and Folger, 1997](#)). Empirical evidence provided by [Kennedy et al. \(2004\)](#) supports the idea that the workplace based interactional inequity was the motivation behind the violent behavior of the employees.

Empirical evidence has discovered that the degree to which employees perceive procedural injustice increases their retributive motives towards the company and this culminates to undesirable work practices (Jones, 2004). As determined by [Fox et al. \(2001\)](#), procedural justice is more negatively associated with interpersonal and organizational deviance, and distributive and procedural justice are all negatively related with organizational and personal deviance. The task performance and procedural justice have moderate correlation with intrinsic motivation, however, the interpersonal justice does not have a strong relationship with task routine and intrinsic motivation of the employees ([Zapata-Phelan, C. P. et al. 2008](#)).

People who have poor self-control are likely to commit deviant behavior. [Skarlicki and Pugh \(2005\)](#) found out that unpleasant emotions oriented toward others and procedural justice are negatively related.

Numerous studies demonstrate that the attitudes and behaviors of the employees, i.e. as work satisfaction and organizational commitment are positively correlated with the justice perceptions (Folger and Konovsky, 1989; McFarlin and Sweeney, 2000).

Supervisor inequity treatment has also been proved to be a significant predictor of supervisor-targeted animosity. [Mitchell and Ambrose \(2007\)](#) established that the higher the negative reciprocity attitudes of people, the higher the relationship between abusive

supervision and supervisor-directed misconduct. The negative attitude of reciprocity increases the likelihood of a negative reaction of the person (Mitchell & Cropanzano, 2005).

In an investigation conducted by [Tepper \(2005\)](#), abusive supervision influenced the ideas of justice of employees significantly and consequently increased the rate of employee turnover and psychological distress.

[Biess \(1999\)](#) identified supervisors as a frequent cause of interpersonal treatment which he emphasized as a significant aspect of abusive supervision. The study conducted by [Stecher and Rosse \(2005\)](#) has shown that employees are unhappy when distributive justice is poorly practiced and are more likely to work less in such situations.

[Martinson et al. \(2006\)](#) found that there was a significant association between the self-reports of misbehavior of scientists and the views of procedural justice, but it was not found between the views of distributive justice and misbehavior among scientists in their sample as a whole. [Hung et al. \(2009\)](#) used the structural equation modeling to examine the relationship between the perceived coworker loafing and the counterproductive job practices. They have found that the perceived coworker loafing was positively and significantly linked to the counterproductive work conduct towards coworkers and counterproductive work conduct towards organizations.

Penny and Spector (2005) found out that interpersonal conflict, organizational restrictions, and rudeness were positively related to CWB but negatively related with job satisfaction.

[Klendauer and Deller \(2009\)](#) show that affective commitment is positively related with all four dimensions of fairness, but only interactional justice can be specifically related with the affective one.

Research Objective

The study seeks to establish the correlation between the various elements of organization justice and counterproductive behaviour to both their organization and their supervisors respectively. Secondly, it will determine that out of the four elements of organizational justice, which one element contributes more to CBW-O and CWB-S and thirdly to identify the mediating nature of the employees yearnings to revenge on the relationship between organizational justice and counterproductive behavior.

Research Methodology:

Conceptual Framework

The variables included in the study are four dimensions of organizational justice, revenge desires for supervisor (R-S) and organization(R- O) and counterproductive behavior of the employees to supervisor (CWB-S) and to organization (CWB-O). In the current research, CWB-O and CWB-S are treated as dependent variable whereas procedural justice, distributive justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice are taken as independent variables. Revenge desire for supervisor and revenge desire for organization are being treated as mediating variables. The research framework is shown as below:

Figure 1

Independent Variables

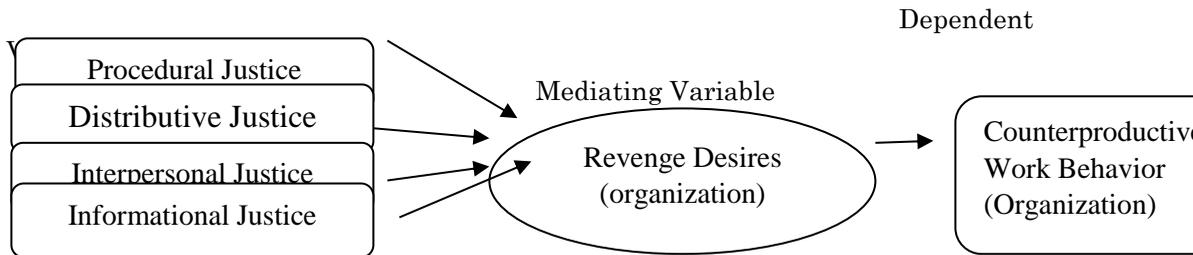
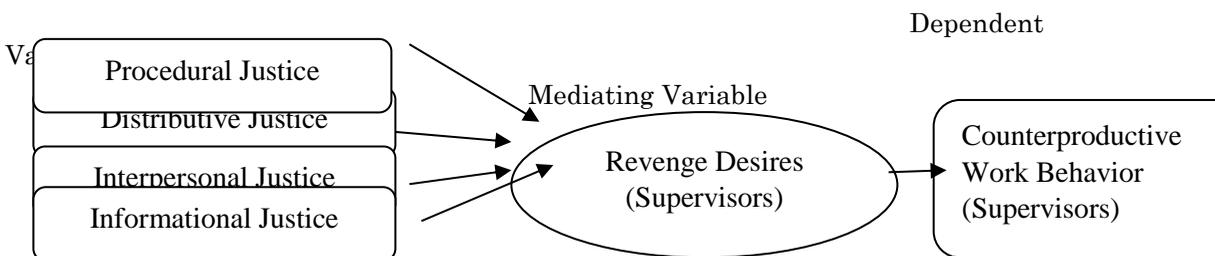


Figure 2

Independent Variables



Data Collection

The research has been conducted in Pakistan city of Islambad and Rawalpindi. The samples were chosen randomly and included male and female employees in the public and the private sector with 250 questionnaires distributed and 169 of them returned to the researcher providing a response rate of 67.6%.

Research Instrument

Colquitt (2001) developed a four-factor scale of justice to measure the perspectives of employees on justice.

Employees were given seven questions to assess their level of procedural fairness. The scale of distributive justice has four items. Perceptions about interpersonal justice are asked four questions. The supervisor of the employee is also required to be consulted on the interpersonal justice issue to evaluate the opinion about the informational justice

scale, four questions were provided. The questions to be applied in evaluating the motivation of the employees in seeking revenge are the ones found in the study of [Jones \(2009\)](#). The respondents had five questions to determine their unproductive work behavior towards their superiors and eight questions to determine their counterproductive work behavior towards the organization. In the study, [Jones \(2009\)](#) provided the research questions.

Data Analysis Methods

Correlation, multiple simultaneous regression analysis and hierarchical regression analysis and Baron and Kenny test of mediation is used in the analysis of data descriptive statistics.

Results and Discussions

The Cronbach alpha of all the scales are determined to lie within the range of 0.84 and 0.96 and this provides the reliability that all the constructs are consistent in their measures. The minimum of the mean distributive justice demonstrates that the employees understand that the distributive justice is the lowest amongst all the dimensions of organizational justice. Table 1 indicated that employees exhibit more counterproductive behavior towards supervisor than the counterproductive work behavior towards organization.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations and Reliability Coefficients

Scale	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach Alpha
Procedure Justice	4.39	0.35	0.95
Distribution Justice	3.51	0.52	0.90
Interpersonal Justice	4.34	0.33	0.94
Informational Justice	4.63	0.23	0.84
Revenge for Desire- Organization	3.79	0.11	0.92
Revenge for Desire- Supervisor	4.22	0.17	0.92
CWB - Organization	4.01	0.122	0.96
CWB- Supervisors	4.70	0.18	0.93

Intercorrelation matrix in Table 2 shows that procedure justice and distribution justice are negatively correlated with CWB-O, whereas inter-persona justice and information justice is negatively associated with CWB-S. It further shows that procedural justice is negatively correlated with the employees desire for revenge towards organization, whereas inter-person and informational justice are negatively associated with the employees desires for revenge against their supervisors.

Table 2

Intercorrelation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	1	.102	.053	.103	-.759**	-.076	-.928**	-.091

1.Procedure Justice								
2. Distribution Justice	1	-.161*	-.161*	-.090	.207**	-.197*	.171*	
3.Inter-person justice		1	.815**	.116	-.883**	-.026	-.910**	
4.Information Justice			1	.138	-.807**	-.096	-.919**	
5. Revenge- O				1	-.092	.776**	-.138	
6. Revenge- S					1	.033	.892**	
7.CWB-O						1	.074	
8.CWB-S							1	

**p<0.01, *p <0.05

According to the the result of multiple regression CWB-O is taken as criterion variable, justice dimensions are taken as independent variables. Results of Table 3 shows that Adjusted R² is 0.87.

Table 3

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.934 ^a	.873	.870	.60353

a. Predictors: (Constant), Informational Justice, Procedural Justice, Distributive Justice, Interpersonal justice

Table 4 shows that combination of the given predictors or independent variables significantly (p<.001) predicts the CWB-O of the employees.

Table 4

ANOVA ^b						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	410.959	4	102.740	282.056	.000 ^a
	Residual	59.738	164	.364		
	Total	470.697	168			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Informational Justice, Procedural Justice, Distributive Justice, Interpersonal justice

b. Dependent Variable: CWBO

Multiple regression was conducted to test the first four hypotheses. The results of Table 5 supported the first and second hypothesis, therefore we reject the first and second null hypothesis and concluded that justice related with procedures and linked with

distribution justice taken in the analysis contribute negatively ($p < 0.01$) towards CWB-O. Table below showed that Inter-person justice and information justice did not have any significant contribution towards CWB-O, so we do not reject third and fourth null hypothesis.

Table 5

Multiple Regression Analysis

Independent Variables	B	SEB	t	Sig.
Procedural Justice	-0.99	0.03	-32.38	0.000
Distributive Justice	-0.15	0.04	-3.70	0.000
Interpersonal Justice	0.06	0.05	1.31	0.193
Informational Justice	-0.15	0.10	-1.44	0.151
(Constant)	9.27	0.37	25.07	0.000

Dependent Variable: CWB-O

Table 6 shows the result of multiple regression when CWB-S is taken as dependent variable whereas justice dimensions are taken as independent variables. Results of Table 6 shows that Adjusted R^2 is 0.92, which means that 92% of the variance in CWB-S can be predicted by procedure justice, distribution justice, inter-person and information justice.

Table 6

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.960 ^a	.922	.920	.37793

a. Predictors: (Constant), Informational Justice, Procedural Justice, Distributive Justice, Interpersonal justice

Table 7 shows that combination of the given predictors or independent variables significantly ($p < .001$) predicts the CWB-S of the employees.

Table 7

ANOVA ^b						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	275.385	4	68.846	482.001	.000 ^a
	Residual	23.425	164	.143		
	Total	298.810	168			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Informational Justice, Procedural Justice, Distributive Justice, Interpersonal justice

b. Dependent Variable: CWB-Supervisor

Result shows that interpersonal justice and informational justice contribute negatively ($p < 0.01$) towards CWB-O. Table below showed that justice related to procedures and distributive justice did not have any significant contribution towards CWB-S.

Table 8

Independent Variables	B	SEB	t	Sig.
Procedure Justice	-0.01	0.02	-0.56	0.578
Distributive Justice	0.01	0.03	0.49	0.623
Inter person Justice	-0.38	0.03	-12.66	0.000
Information Justice	-0.86	0.06	-13.79	0.000
(Constant)	10.38	0.23	44.81	0.000

Dependent Variable: CWB-S

To test the hypothesis that procedural justice predicts more unique variation in counterproductive behavior aimed at an organization (CWB-O) than other scales of organization justice or not, hierarchical multiple regression analysis of procedure justice, distribution justice, inter-person justice and informational justice on CWB-O was conducted. The variables were inputted into the regression equation in four steps, the interpersonal justice in the first step, interpersonal justice and information justice in the second step that gave no significant increase in the R², but the distributive justice with the interpersonal and informational justice increased the R² significantly between 0.017 and 0.062 (Change in R² = 0.044).

Table 9

Variable	B	SEB	t	Sig.
Step 1				
Interpersonal Justice	-0.026	0.02	-0.333	0.739
Constant	4.13	0.04	11.459	0.000
R ²	0.001			
Step 2				
Interpersonal Justice	0.157	0.133	1.176	0.241
Informational Justice	-0.464	0.276	-1.681	0.095

(Constant)	5.479	0.879	6.231	0.000
R ²	0.017			
Change in R ²	0.017			
Step 3				
Inter-person Justice	0.138	0.131	1.056	0.292
Information Justice	-0.504	0.271	-1.861	0.065
Distribution Justice	-0.296	0.106	-2.796	0.006
(Constant)	6.788	0.981	6.921	0.000
R ²	0.062*			
Change in R ²	0.044*			
Step 4				
Interpersonal Justice	0.063	0.048	1.307	0.193
Informational Justice	-0.145	0.101	-1.442	0.151
Distributive Justice	-0.146	0.039	-3.704	0.000
Procedural Justice	-0.989	0.031	-32.378	0.000
(Constant)	9.270	0.370	25.067	0.000
R ²	0.873**			
Change in R ²	0.811**			
Dependent Variable: CWB				
**p<.01, *p<.05				

The fourth step involved the addition of procedural justices to other dimensions of justice to ascertain its specific impact to R². And the outcome was R² which was significantly enriched (by the addition of the procedural justice). It can be concluded, therefore, that procedural justice can be used to explain more distinct variance towards CWB-O than the other dimensions of organizational justice.

In order to test the hypothesis that, interpersonal justice has a stronger unique variance in counterproductive work behavior against supervisor (CWB-S) than distributive justice or other organizational justice dimensions do, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis of procedural justice, distributive justice, inter person justice and information justice was performed on CWB-S. The variables were then inputted into the regression equation in four steps the first being procedural justice. In the second step, procedural justice in combination with distributive justice supplements the information justice in the second step with procedural justice and distributive justice, the increase in R² is significantly higher by 0.033 when the addition is procedural justice which gives the result of 0.804 (Change of R² = 0.804).

Table 10

Variable	B	SEB	t	Sig.
Step 1				
Procedural Justice	-0.079	0.067	-1.182	0.239
Constant	5.046	0.310	16.302	0.000
R ²	0.008			
Step 2				
Procedural Justice	-0.095	0.066	-1.435	0.153
Distributive Justice	0.202	0.084	2.391	0.018

(Constant)	4.407	0.406	10.867	
R ²	0.041*			
Change in R ²	0.033*			
Step 3				
Procedure Justice	0.001	0.027	0.035	0.972
Distributive Justice	0.026	0.035	0.759	0.449
Information Justice	-1.515	0.052	-29.247	0.000
(Constant)	11.596	0.295	39.275	0.000
R ²	0.845**			
Change in R ²	.804**			
Step 4				
Procedure Justice	-0.011	0.019	-0.559	0.577
Distributive Justice	0.012	0.025	0.493	0.623
Information Justice	-0.869	0.063	-13.793	0.000
Inter persona Justice	-0.383	0.030	-12.661	0.000
(Constant)	10.376	0.232	44.806	0.000
R ²	0.922**			
Change in R ²	0.077**			
Dependent Variable: CWBS				
**p<.01, *p<.05				

Interpersonal justice was also added in the fourth step with other dimensions of justice, to see its unique effect on R². And the result showed R² significantly increased by 0.077 by the inclusion of interpersonal justice. So it is concluded from the hierarchical regression analysis that interpersonal justice explains more unique variance towards CWB-S among the other dimensions of organizational justice, So tenth null hypothesis is rejected.

As shown in Table 11, four steps of regression analysis were applied to find out the effect of mediating role of variable ‘desires for revenge against organization’ between ‘procedural justice’ and ‘CWB-O’.

In the first step (as shown in Table. 11) Procedural justice is taken as independent variable and CWB-O is taken dependent variable (the value of the R² shown in the table is .861). In the second step procedural justice is taken as independent variable and the variable showing desires for revenge against one’s organization (mediating variable) as criterion variable; the significant value of the R² shown in table is .577.

Table 11

Variable	B	SEB	t	Sig.
Step 1				
Procedural Justice (IV)	-1.005	0.031	-32.134	0.000
CWB-O (DV)				
R ²	.861**			
Step 2				
Procedural Justice (IV)	-0.708	0.047	-15.084	0.000
Revenge desires - O (DV)				
R ²	.577**			

Step 3				
Procedural Justice (IV)	-0.865	0.046	-18.789	0.000
Revenge desires - O (IV)	0.197	0.049	3.997	0.000
CWB-O (DV)				
R ²	0.873**			
Step 4				
Step3 (R ²) - Step 1 (R ²)	0.873**-.861**= 0.0123**			

In the third step CWB-O was regressed on both the R-O (mediating variable) and procedural justice (independent variable), the significant value of R² is .873. Finally step 4 concluded that R-O plays a significant but partial mediating role between relationship of procedure justice and CWB-O as difference in R² is only .0123.

Table 12

Variable	B	SEB	t	Sig.
Step 1				
Interpersonal Justice (IV)	-0.726	0.026	-28.346	0.000
CWB-S (DV)				
R ²	.828**			
Step 2				
Interpersonal Justice (IV)	-0.732	0.030	-24.339	0.000
Revenge desires - S (DV)				
R ²	.780**			
Step 3				
Interpersonal Justice (IV)	-0.444	0.049	-9.089	0.000
Revenge desires - S (IV)	0.385	0.059	6.533	0.000
CWB-S (DV)				
R ²	0.863**			
Step 4				
Step3 (R ²) - Step 1 (R ²)	0.863**-.828**= 0.035**			

The regression analysis used four steps to establish the impact that mediating role of variable desires against supervisor involves on interpersonal justice and CWB-S.

The first step (as in Table) is an inquiry. 12) CWB-S becomes dependent variable and Interpersonal justice is considered an independent one(The value of the R² in the table is 0.828). In the second step interpersonal justice is considered as independent variable and the variable represents desires to take revenge with one supervisor (mediating variable) as dependent variable; the significant value of the R² value in table is .780.

In the third step CWB-S was regressed on the R-S (mediating variable) as well as interpersonal justice (independent variable) the value of R² is significant with a value of.863. The final step 4 arrived at the conclusion that relationship of interpersonal justice has a significant but less than full mediating effect on CWB-S with R-S since the difference in R² is not substantial enough (.035).

Key Findings, Conclusion and Policy Implications

This study is aimed at establishing the relationship between four organization justice elements and the unproductive work behavior by workers against their employers and supervisors.

The researchers discovered that distributive and procedural justice influenced CWB-O negatively, whereas the effect of informational and interpersonal justice could not be identified. It was however found that the effect of procedural justice and distributive justice on CWB-S could not be discerned, but inter-person and information justice had negative effects. It was also shown that procedural justice showed more unique variance in respect of CWB-O, but interpersonal justice had more unique variance in relation to CWB-S.

The researchers found that the association between procedural justice and counterproductive work behavior towards the organization was mediated by the vengeance desires of the employees towards their organization and the association involving interpersonal justice and counterproductive work behavior towards their supervisors partly. The employers need to identify and appreciate their employees and treat them with dignity. In order to enhance the perceptions of distributive fairness in the minds of the employees, the managers should clarify the way the organization compensation structure is designed to work. As a way of enhancing the perceptions of procedural justice, organizations can establish a board of employees, which can be used to communicate official requests and ideas of different organizational procedures to the leaders of the organization.

Finally, to enhance the perceptions of interactional justice, managers have to treat the staff members with dignity, improve communication between the administration and employees, give them timely feedbacks, and personally attend to different matters that are related to their work in the company. When organizational fairness is enhanced, then the employees can be improved in terms of trust and morale ([Forret and Love 2007](#)).

Limitations

The study has the disadvantage of being cross-sectional. It would be preferable to carry out such studies in the future using experimental designs. The employees can be self reporting the wrongdoing which can also lead to underreporting in the data.

Moreover, as desires of revenge are inherent, employees can hardly judge them. The statistics may be biased due to the following reason: the employees reported their perceptions of justice in relation to the real justice that exists within the working environments.

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